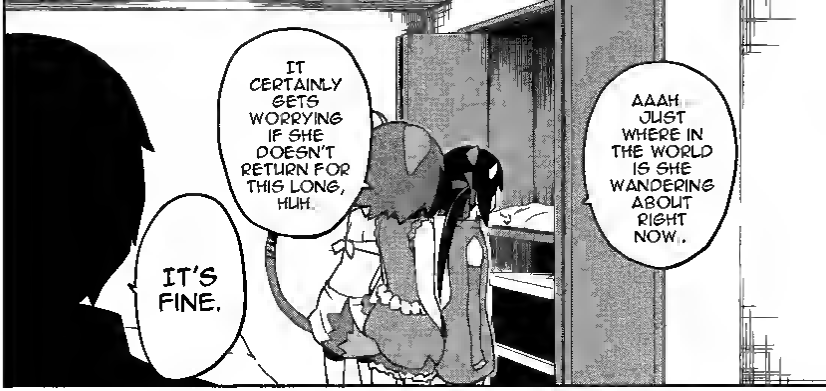
第25話


AAAH... JUST WHERE IN THE WORLD IS SHE WANDERING ABOUT RIGHT NOW...
IT CERTAINLY GETS WORRYING IF SHE DOESN'T RETURN FOR THIS LONG, HUH.
IT'S FINE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ...?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, SHE MUST HAVE JUST GONE BACK TO HER OWNER'S PLACE.

'OWNER'?
YOU KNOW, SINCE SHE ALWAYS HAD A COLLAR ON...

AH!
...WAIT, NO, YOU'VE CONVINCED ME FOR A SECOND THERE.
BUT ETO-MUSUME ARE NOT PETS DESS DESS!
BUT COLLARS ARE SIGNS OF OBEDIENCE AND DOMINANCE.
THAT'S TRUE BUT STILL!
YOU ARE WRONG, TAKERU! THAT COLLAR IS ACTUALLY A LIMITER THAT RESTRAINS NYA-TAN'S TRUE POWERS!
Really
WAS THERE GOING TO BE SUCH AN EXCITING DEVELOPMENT IN THIS?
SEEMS LIKE THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME FOR ME TO TAKE THIS DAMNED THING OFF -NYA
NYA-TAN'S SOL/LULL IS INCREASING RAPIDLY!?
SHE DOESN'T EVEN NEED PRETTY MODE ANYMORE

THAT'S TRUE!
SPEAKING OF PRETTY MODE...
Pre
Pre
NYA-TAN DOESN'T HAVE THAT COLLAR ANYMORE IN HER PRETTY MODE, DOES SHE?
SO IT LOOKS LIKE SHE HAD ALREADY RELEASED HER TRUE POWERS, HUH
I HOPE SHE HAS A SECOND STAGE OF TRANSFORMATION ON HAND...
I'M SURE THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO CONNECTION AT ALL DESS DESS

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE COLLAR, THEN?
FA-
...
It's just something popular in the zodiac world nowadays dess dess
FA-SHION! IT'S JUST FA-SHION DESS DESS!!

SHBAP
SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YEAH.
SOMETHING LIKE THIS MAYBE...?
HUH, I ACTUALLY GOT IT.
WEAPON_
IT'S A WEAPON
SO THAT THING INU-TAN IS WEARING IS ALSO JUST FASHION?

IT'S A SCRUNCHIE.
It's soft
THEN IS THAT THING ON KII-TAN ALSO A WEAPON?

SO ANYWAY, NYA-TAN DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE AN OWNER.
URI-TAN SURE DOESN'T GO ALONG WITH THE FLOW AT ALL.
WELL SORRY FOR SAYING THINGS ON MY OWN WHIM DESS DESS!
EVEN IF WE SAY THAT NYA-TAN HAS AN OWNER,
THAT OWNER WOULD BE YOU DESS DESS, TAKERU-SAN!
SHE IS BASICALLY YOUR CAT NOW DESS DESS!

IS THAT SO..
SHE'S BASI-CALLY MY CAT NOW...
HAA...
HMM...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'HMM'?

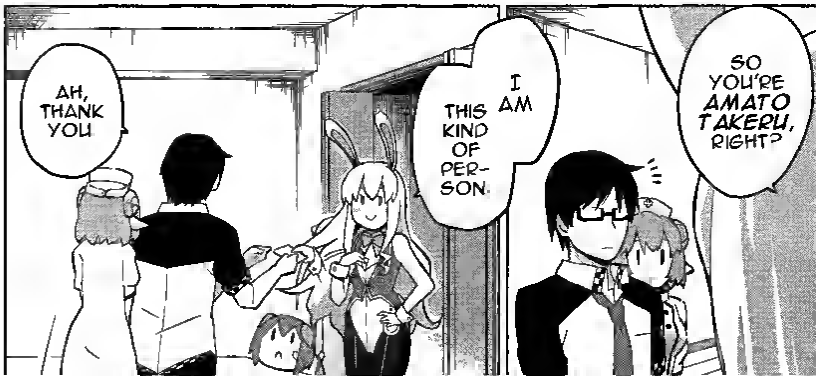
HELLO TAKERU-SAAAN~
MEI-TAN HAS COME TO VISIT YOU AFTER A LONG TIME~
THE MESSEN-GER OF GOD WHO WILL COMFORT YOU OVER AND OVER!
SORRY, WE'RE KINDA IN THE MIDDLE OF A SERIOUS TALK RIGHT NOW.
Not a good time for such sweet talk

ANYWAY IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN THAT LONG AFTER
OR IS 'ONE SINGLE DAY' A LONG TIME FOR YOU?
THE TIME IT TAKES TO MAKE YOUR HEART FEEL LONELY...
THAT'S WHAT 'A LONG TIME' IS TO ME...
WHAT THE HELL IS SHE BLABBERING ON ABOUT NOW?
WE'RE GETTING DISTRACTED EVERY 10 MINUTES
BUT EVEN THOUGH MEI HAS FALLEN TO SUCH A LOVELY YET TRAGIC STATE, TAKERU-SAN IS...
HEY.
YES?
HAVE YOU SEEN NYA-TAN ANYWHERE?
WHA?
?

I SHOULD BE MAD SINCE THE FIRST THING HE SAID IN FRONT OF MY FACE WAS ANOTHER GIRL'S NAME...
BUT TAKERU-SAN ISN'T THAT KIND OF PERSON, WHICH MEANS, THERE MUST BE A HIDDEN, DEEP MEANING BEHIND THOSE WORDS...
THAT'S RIGHT, A SECRET CODE THAT ONLY MEI AND HE KNOWS...
NYA-TAN = CAT →MY CUTE LITTLE KITTY
HAVE YOU SEEN →HAVE YOU SEEN MEI ANYWHERE →NO, I HAVEN'T BECAUSE I AM MEI
WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT IT ALL ACTUALLY MEANT 'I LOVE YOU'.
whoooah
IS HER HEAD OKAY?
I THINK HER FACE SHOWED THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD THE GRAVE SITUATION WE'RE IN
THAT'S JUST YOUR IMAGI-NATION
YES, SO ANYWAY WHAT'S UP WITH NYA-TAN AGAIN?
nonchalantly
SHE SWITCHED BACK SO FAST!
ACTUALLY, SHE HASN'T COME BACK FOR SEVERAL DAYS NOW DESS DESS
HMM
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'HMM'
AAH, SO THAT'S WHY TAKERU-SAN
DION'T LOOK LIKE HE HAD MUCH ENERGY TODAY...

AND THE 'N' IN 'MEI-TAN' STANDS FOR 'GENKI' AS WELL!!
THE SAME COULD BE SAID FOR ALL THE OTHER ETO-MUSUME THOUGH
dess dess
TN NOTE: GENKI MEANS ENERGETIC
DAKUTEN' S THE DOTTED 9IEN ABOVE JAPANESE CHARACTERS
THAT TURNS 'KE' INTO 'GE' FOR EXAMPLE
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MEI-TAN
THERE'S NO ONE ELSE IN THE WORLD TO WHOM THE WORD 'GENKI' FITS AS WELL AS ME.
THE 'KE' IN 'TAKERU' STANDS FOR 'GENKI', IN FACT
SAYING THAT WITH SUCH A STRAIGHT FACE IS KINDA UNCONVINCING
Also where's the dakuten
SHE WOULDN'T RING THE INTERCOM THOUGH
step step step
click
MAYBE SHE'S COMING BACK!?
I GUESS SO...
PIN PON
YEEES~
BUT SURELY, THIS KIND OF PATTERN LEADS TO THAT.
'THAT'?

I can't see
Bash
SORRY FOR THE INTRU-SION!
DUN
IT'S 'THAAAAAAAAT'!!
THAT = THE APPEARANCE OF A NEW ETO-SHIN
SO A VERY CLASSY ONE HAS COME THIS TIME AROUND
HOW DO I FARE COM-PARED TO HER?
VERY MUCH LIKE A COM-MONER


SO YOU'RE AMATO TAKERU, RIGHT?
I AM THIS KIND OF PER-SON
AH, THANK YOU

A COL-LAR?
SCRUN-CHIE, ACTUAL-LY.
HOLD THAT INTRO-DUCTION!
PSH
555H
TAKERU ALWAYS USED TO GUESS THE ORIGINS OF A NEW CHARACTER WHENEVER ONE SHOWED UP!
WE SHOULD DO THAT FOR THIS TIME AS WELL, SINCE IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE SOMEONE CAME WITH THAT NOSTALGIC PATTERN!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'PAT-TERN'?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY, BUT THE ONE WHO HAD BEEN DOING THAT WAS ACTUALLY NYA-TAN, YOU KNOW?
EH, IS THAT SO?
YEAH
THEN SORRY FOR THAT.
YEAH
THOUGH TAKERU-SAN HAD ALWAYS FOLLOWED HER ALONG SO JOYOUSLY

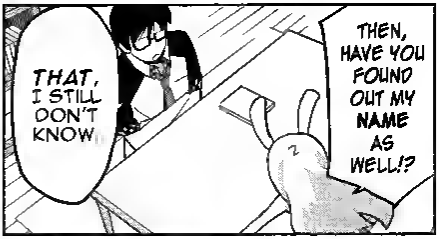
WELL THEN, WHO WOULD LIKE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF NYA-TAN THIS TIME?
THAT'S THE PROBLEM HERE!?
YEEES~ MEI WILL DO IT~
YOU WILL!?
EEEH? BUT I WANNA DO IT TOO...
Eh
IS THIS SOMETHING LIKE THE PROTAGONIST ROLE FOR A SCHOOL PLAY?
WE DON'T NEED TWO NYA-TANS IN THIS WORLD, THOUGH
NARROW YOURSELVES DOWN TO ONE
How about we split the role into halves?
Then Mei will act as Nya!
Then I'm Tan!?
WHAT SHOULD I DO IF HE SAYS SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
I WON'T
Those cat ears looks so good on him
No no I will be the one who plays Nya-tan!

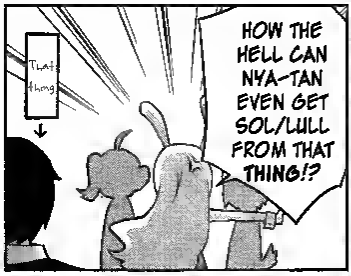
ME!?
YOU WANT ME TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF NYA-TAN GUESSING MY OWN ORIGINS!?
GA
N
OR BETTER YET, INSTEAD OF GETTING EITHER OF THOSE TWO
WELL, FINE!
I SHALL SHOW YOU ALL THAT EVEN SUCH RIDICULOUS REQUESTS AS THIS ARE NO MATCH FOR ME!
PLEASE DO YOUR BEST
YOU'VE PRETTY MUCH BLOWN MY COVER WITH THAT, YOU KNOW!?
It's cute.
IT WILL BE A PIECE OF CAKE FOR YOU, THE FAMED PRODUCER AS WELL AS THE CEO OF UTC
Pat
WELL THEN, LET ME ASK YOU THIS!
EXACTLY WHAT DO YOU, NYA-TAN, SUPPOSE I AM!?
DUN
AND MY ANSWER IS -NYA...!
KAPU!

YOUR ANSWER IS...
.....
twitch
twitch
TWITCH
TWITCH
I...! I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT AN IDIOT LIKE HER WOULD THINK...!!
SELF-PRODUCING FAIL
NO, ACTUALLY THAT FACE JUST NOW WAS A PRETTY GOOD IMPRESSION OF AN IDIOT
SO WHAT, ARE YOU GIVING UP?
KUU... IT'D BE A DISGRACE FOR ME TO GIVE UP NOW
BUT BEING CALLED AN IDIOT IS A DISGRACE AS WELL
HOW TROU-BLING.
YOU'RE ACTING AS IF THIS IS SOMEONE ELSE'S BUSINESS, AMATO TAKERU!
WOULDN'T TRYING TO LIVEN UP THIS SITUATION EVEN A LITTLE BE THE LEAST YOU, AS SOMEONE WHO DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM, COULD DO!?
I ALREADY KNOW THAT YOU'RE THE ETO-SHIN OF RABBIT, THOUGH.

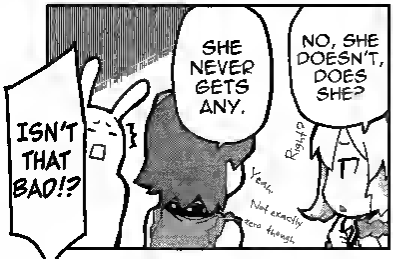
YOU COME OVER HERE SO I CAN RIP YOU A NEW OOOOOOOONE
GROOAR
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO SOOOOOOOOOOOLVE
I'LL LEAVE THAT TO NYA-TAN

I COULD TELL JUST BY LOOKING.


THEN, HAVE YOU FOUND OUT MY NAME AS WELL!?
THAT, I STILL DON'T KNOW


That thing
HOW THE HELL CAN NYA-TAN EVEN GET SOL/LULL FROM THAT THING!?

SFX GYAOOOH
HEY! WAIT! WHAT'S THIS!?
WHAT'S WITH THAT LAZY GUY THERE!?
Answer
ETO-SHIN OF RABBIT, USA-TAN

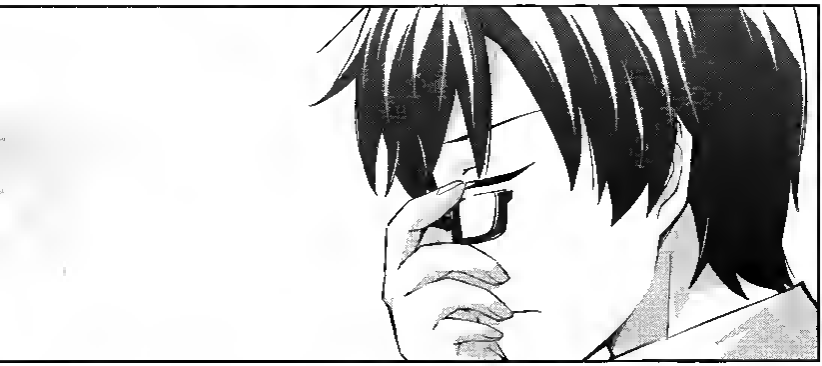

ISN'T THAT BAD!?
SHE NEVER GETS ANY.
NO, SHE DOESN'T, DOES SHE?
Right?
Yeah, Not exactly zero though.

"Pet Loss Syndrome"

After losing a precious pet, one can be dealt a large damage to both body and mind, and become overly lethargic or even unable to sleep well

'PET'...?
HAA... EVEN IF THAT IS THE CASE...
THEN WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS SUPPOSED 'PET LOSS'?
WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S KIND OF NICE TO SEE THAT TAKERU-SAN HAS GOTTEN A LOT MORE GENTLE FROM IT.
MORE LIKE HE HAD SPENT TOO MUCH TIME WITH NYA-TAN, BUT HE IS USUALLY LIKE THIS ACTUALLY.
I DON'T THINK IT'S ANYTHING THAT SERIOUS..

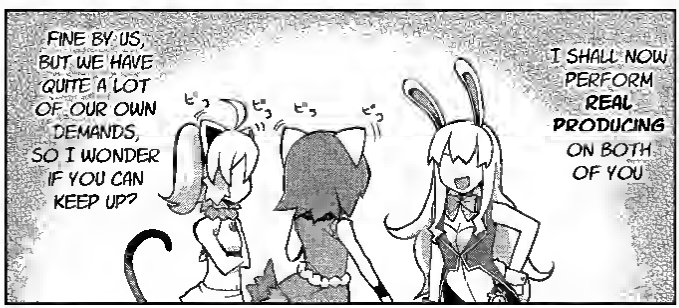
BY THE WAY, WHAT KIND OF PET DID HE KEEP ANY-WAY?
Mm
IF THAT'S THE CASE, IT IS VITAL THAT HE ACCEPT AND FACE THE REALITY!
THAT'S REALLY VAGUE...
'FACE THE REAL-ITY'...
THAT WOULD MEAN THAT WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT
EXACTLY WHAT NYA-TAN WAS TO TAKERU-SAN.
NYA-TAN...
HUH...
I'll be in your care from today onwards -nya!



LET'S GO GET NYA-TAN...
TAKERU-SAN...
...LET'S GO.

SO THAT WE CAN PUNISH HER.
GRIL
WAIT, P-PUNISH ...!?
AH, T-THAT'S RIGHT, BECAUSE SHE IS A BAD GIRL FOR LEAVING WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING, RIGHT...?

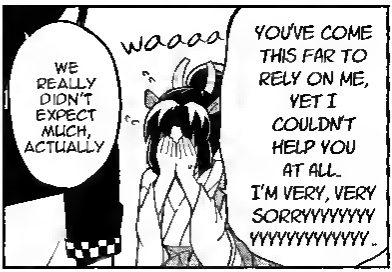
GONK
fumble
HUH...
SO TAKERU-SAN WAS THE TYPE OF MAN WHO TAKES OFF HIS GLASSES WHEN HE GETS SERIOUS, HUH~

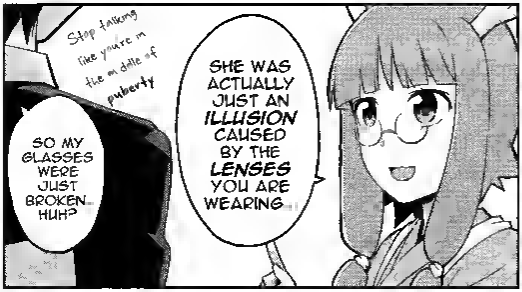

FINE BY US, BUT WE HAVE QUITE A LOT OF OUR OWN DEMANDS, SO I WONDER IF YOU CAN KEEP UP?
I SHALL NOW PERFORM REAL PRODUCING ON BOTH OF YOU

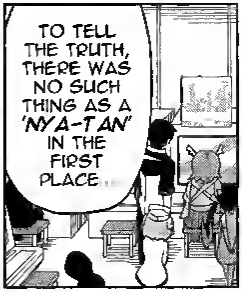
OOOOI, MO-TAAAAN~
LET'S TRY ASKING THE OTHER ETO-SHIN FOR STARTERS
OKAY...
LOOKS LIKE SHE ISN'T HERE
SHE COULD HAVE JUST GONE OUT...
OR...
ha
OR MAY-BE!
SHE MIGHT HAVE GONE AND ELOPED WITH NYA-TAN~!
NOW I'M WORRIED ABOUT WHAT HAP-PENED TO NYA-TAN IN A DIFFERENT WAY...
OR RATHER, DID SHE KIDNAP NYA-TAN?
I'll be borrowing Nya-tan for a while~
Okay there you go
I mean it happened before
I DON'T THINK SO. MO-TAN WOULD LET US KNOW BEFORE SHE DOES ANY-THING LIKE THAT.
WHAT-EVER, LET'S GET TO OUR NEXT STOP.

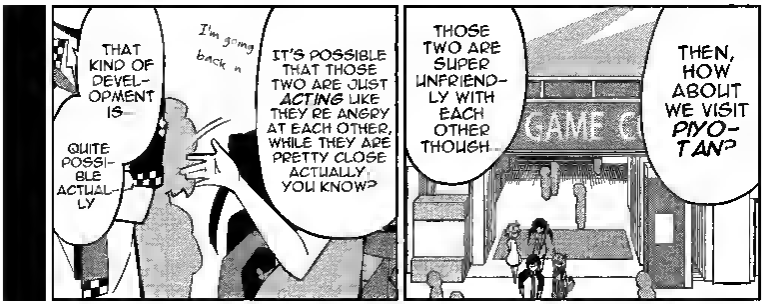
DIDN'T EXP-
GNNH

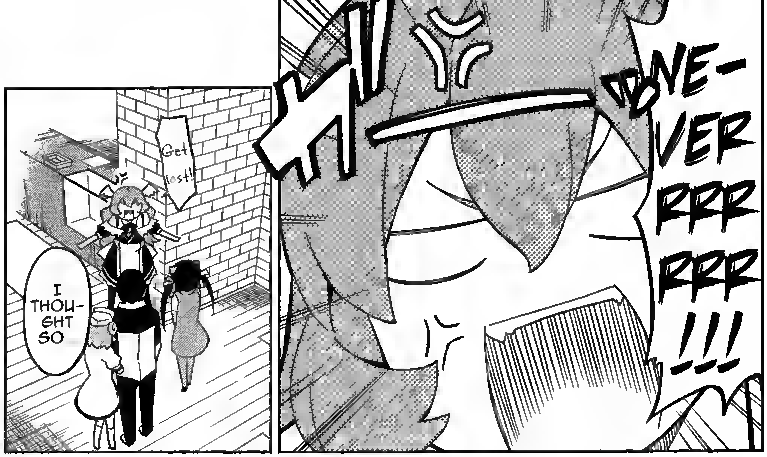
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE NYA-TAN IS?
HUH...?
NO... NOT IN PARTI-CULAR...


YOU'VE COME THIS FAR TO RELY ON ME, YET I COULDN'T HELP YOU AT ALL. I'M VERY, VERY SORRYYYYYYY YYYYYYYYYYY..
Waaaa
WE REALLY DIDN'T EXPECT MUCH, ACTUALLY


Stop talking like you're in the middle of puberty
SO MY GLASSES WERE JUST BROKEN... HUH?
SHE WAS ACTUALLY JUST AN ILLUSION CAUSED BY THE LENSES YOU ARE WEARING...


TO TELL THE TRUTH, THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS A 'NYA-TAN' IN THE FIRST PLACE...


THAT KIND OF DEVEL-OPMENT IS...
QUITE POSSI-BLE ACTUAL-LY
I'm going back n
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THOSE TWO ARE JUST ACTING LIKE THEY RE ANGRY AT EACH OTHER, WHILE THEY ARE PRETTY CLOSE ACTUALLY YOU KNOW?
THOSE TWO ARE SUPER UNFRIEND-LY WITH EACH OTHER THOUGH...
THEN, HOW ABOUT WE VISIT PIYO-TAN?




SFX. GAAAAAH

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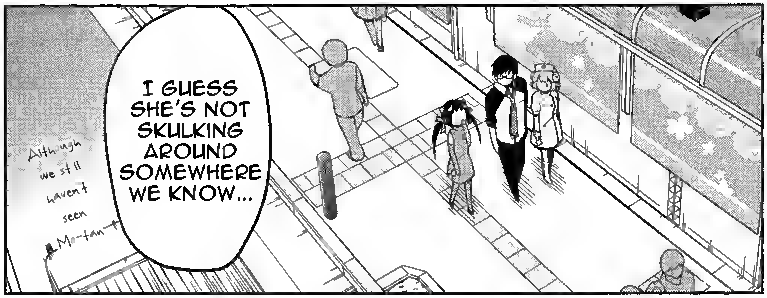

COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE WAS THIS ONE TIME WHEN SHE ALMOST FLEW AWAY TO THAILAND, OR WAS THERE...?
AT LEAST SAY THAT SHE SWAM THERE...
OR MAYBE SHE GREW WINGS AND FLEW THERE~
SHE'D HAVE TO TAKE A PLANE THEN.
dess dess
TRAVELING ALONE
MAYBE SHE WENT ALL THE WAY TO THE COUNTRY WHERE THERE IS A CAT IN THE ZODIAC?

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